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Yes, the Phantom of the Opera. The one with the singing and mask and the sick electric guitar sting. It is the Phantom, a small French story of the early 20th century that most people know through its countless, way more popular adaptations. But before Andrew Lloyd Webber was capturing tourists on Broadway before Lon Cheney was hamming it on a silent screen before the internet was flooded with Eric/Raoul fanfiction, an author named Gaston Leroux sat down to write a mysterious novel about a ruined chandelier. Leroux was inspired by the rumors that revolved around the old Paris Opera: there were stories about a huge lake hidden under the foundation of the building (it was a really covered water tank), the skeleton of a ballerina, which was used as a ready-made bandage, and about a hidden cache of phonographic records deep in the basement. There was also a true story of the time that a counterweight to a large chandelier fell through the ceiling, killing the builder. So Leroux came up with the operatic ghost responsible for all this weirdness, and turned it into a serialized novel, Fantem de l'Opera. And frankly, it's a pretty schlocky gothic novel. I mean, don't get me wrong. The Phantom of the Opera is a ton of fun, especially if you love dark and brooding monster boyfriends (which I do). This is still one of my infamous, secret favorite books. It's also a toxic mess of gender and racial stereotypes and unhealthy romantic tropes, like many classic love stories. And if you're looking for cheesy synth music, or a true horror masterpiece, or a groundbreaking story, then you should look at one of the many, many Phantom adaptations. But if you're looking for a weird little book that surprisingly challenges your time and place in your discussion of male violence and law, then perhaps give Lera a chance. The Phantom of the Opera Gaston Leroux, \$17, AmazonYou probably know the basics of the story already. Sweet young Ingue, Christine Daao, is called to sing when the leading soprano of the opera gets sick. She is a huge success, and her old childhood friend, Raoul, realizes that he now has a hot one for her. But Christina is now all weird and vague about her new music teacher, who she claims is an angel of music. Plus some mysterious Phantom threatens the managers of the Opera, demanding money and promotion for Christina. He's already killed one scene. Naturally, Christina's angel turns out to be none other than the Phantom himself, a musical genius named Eric, who lives deep in the bowels of the opera house. Phantom Leroux wears a full mask to hide his face, which Christina describes as looking like a skull or head of death (his costume was changed to half-mask for the musical so that the actor could actually use his mouth for singing). Eric is also obsessed with rope tricks, strange mirrors, and since I think turning his back on human society left him with plenty of time on his hands. Managers refuse to pay, so Eric throws this famous chandelier, killing an audience member. Eric also kidnaps Christina in his underground lair where she hangs a little before she yanks off his mask. Eric immediately goes crazy and demands that Christine forever as his fiancée now that she has seen him exposed. He wants her love to insd the depths of hatred he has endured. If I'm a phantom, it's because human hatred made me so, he says. If I want to be saved, it's because your love redeems me. Eric agrees to give her two weeks to get her life together before she moves into his spooky basement apartment, as long as Christina promises to come back and marry him and rid him of his sad, lonely life. He says: Now I want to live like everyone else. I want to have a wife like everyone else and take her on Sundays. I invented a mask that makes me look like someone else. People don't even turn around in the streets. You're going to be the happiest woman. And we'll sing, all on our own, until we swoon away with delight. You're crying! You're afraid of me! And yet I'm not very angry. Love me and you'll see! All I wanted to do was be loved for myself. If you loved me, I should be as gentle as a lamb; and you could do something with me that you liked. Being above the ground, Christina finally tells Raoul what is happening to her. She and Raoul decide to escape together, as Raoul is beautiful, rich, not a murderer. But of course she wants to sing the last song in the opera. Eric kidnaps her again, and it's up to the pretty-boy Raoul to save her with the help of a mysterious Persian man who seems to be one friend of Eric's (he cut out most of the adaptation, leaving Eric with exactly no friends). They're caught in one of Eric's secret escape games in the room though, and Eric reveals that he rigged an ice opera, and if Christina doesn't marry him, he'll blow up the whole place in hell. Christina accepts his conditions and not let everyone die. But then... Eric starts crying nasty. And then Christina starts crying terribly. And then Eric finally realizes that if he really loves this woman, he should stop fucking kidnapping her and threatening her and let her make her own choices. And he lets her go. He tells her that she is free to marry Raoul if she wants to because he does not want to keep making her cry. I know you love the boy ... Don't cry anymore! Then I made it clear to her that where she was concerned, I was only a poor dog ready to die for her... but that she can marry a young man when she is happy. Christina kisses him on the forehead in gratitude. And Eric finally realizes that the way to win people's love is to be kind, not to kidnap them and respect their decisions. There is an element of the element old beauty and monster, a toxic man redeemed a beautiful lady trail to be sure. And that... Not great. But Eric didn't get the girl after all. No love was made because he kidnapped her and threatened her with mass violence. It is only when he sees how miserable he has done to Christina that he puts aside his self-pity for empathy. His actions are not really justified by the fact that he is a sad lonely man who lives underground. Leroux and Christina are sympathetic to Eric's plight; it is clear that he deserves a better-than-life of abuse and fear. But he still doesn't have the right to a girlfriend. His face doesn't make him a monster. His actions do. The phantom is old and dramatic and more than a little silly. It's fun to read for the gothic heroine in us all. But it's also vital to read for all basement residential men out there who feel blind rage towards girls who won't date them. After all, if Eric approached Christine in the usual way, instead of abducting her and then yelling at her about how ugly he was to be loved, she might have liked him. Its real problem is not that he's nose-less, it's that he thinks blowing up the opera house is a reasonable response to getting rejected by his crush. That's definitely not the case. And at the end of the day, even Eric knows it. The Phantom of the Opera Gaston Leroux, \$17, Amazon keep up with the latest daily buzz with BuzzFeed Daily Newsletter! Great classical music for violin is always within reach of the weapon, you just need to know where to look. These classic violin pieces were selected based on melody, popularity and overall appeal. Here's a list for those of you who want to expand your classical music horizons or for those who need retraining in great music. Some of the best violin music in the world has been written by composers including Vivaldi, Vaughan Williams, Mozart, Haydn, and more. Adam Gault Collection/OJO Images/Getty Images Written first for violin and piano, Ralph Vaughan Williams completed The Lark Ascending in 1914, but after solving problems with the violinist, changes were made to the play. It was not until 1920 that the play was performed for the first time. A year later, Williams' orchestral score was completed and performed at the Royal Hall in London. Williams based The Lark Ascending on part of the text in a poem by the English poet George Meredith and included this text in his published work. Vivaldi's Four Seasons was published in 1725 in a set of twelve concertos called Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione. They really are some of the most daring baroque music. Vivaldi wrote separate sonnets to match each movement Seasons you can read here, starting with the Spring Sonnet. Bach was an ingenious keyboardist (mastering the organ and harpsichord) and a brilliant shiny Bach brought Baroque music to its climax by writing music for almost all kinds of musical form, including a violin concerto. His double violin concerto is one of his most famous pieces, and rightly so. It is a masterpiece of the Baroque period. Mozart's efforts to blur the lines between symphony and concert were successful when it came to Sinfonia's concerto at E Flat. The music produced in 1779 was quite successful throughout Paris. Although Mozart has written other similar works, this is the only one he has completed. The world's most famous tango song, Por Una Cabeza, was written in 1935 by Carlos Gardely on the poems of Alfredo Le Pera. Por Una Cabeza means on the head in Spanish; song about a man addicted to horse racing and how he compares it to the love of women. This piece of music is widely used in movies, television and more. Many of you can recognize this piece of music thanks to Franz Liszt, who turned it into a piece for solo piano. Paganini wrote the original score in 1826 for violin and orchestra. This is an exceptional piece of music, as many of you already know. Sibelius wrote only one concert - this is D Small concert in 1904. The solo violin is purely virtuos, but not without a melodic line. The general concert is dark and heavy, but the violin solo introduces a bright and cheerful sound, balance in the score. Although music scholars are not sure of its true origin or date of composition, this concert is attributed to Haydn. Haydn wrote four concertos, of which only three survived. Concert no. 4 is an upbeat typical classical piece of music with a stunning violin solo. Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto at E, composed between 1838 and 1845, became one of the most performed concertos of all time. Given his unique composition style, with its slight variations from concert classic period models, Mendelssohn's concerto was very favored during its premiere. In fact, today it is seen as the perfect concert that many aspiring solo violinists are trying to master early on in their careers. Recorded in 1963, Duke Ellington Jazz Violin Sessions is the youngest music on this list of best violin music. The album was released in 1976. In order to write great jazz music, the composer must have a deep understanding of the theory of classical music, as jazz music is just an evolution of classical music. Ellington's jazz violin sessions are warm, attractive and easy to listen to on repeat throughout the day. 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